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ABSTRACT

Many aspects of social policy affect the lives of shut out youth in Europe. The purpose of a symposium held at the European Youth Center (Strasbourg, France) was to draw attention to these issues and recommend ways to coordinate the social policies that affect the well-being of youth. The relevance of current policies was assessed in local, national, and international contexts. Of special interest in this assessment was the centrality of the family in developing policies for shut out youth. This paper describes the activities of the Symposium's four working groups, whose themes were: (1) Social Policy and Shut Out Youth; (2) Methods and Models of Working Practice; (3) Shut Out Youth and the Cycle of Vulnerability; and (4) Rights of Young People. Separate workshops dealt with different aspects of these themes, including: (1) experience and policy; (2) family policy; (3) policy models; (4) the formulation of policy; (5) health; (6) housing; (7) social welfare; (8) criminality (9) law of parental custody; (10) well-being of the child; (11) interventions; (12) public assistance to the young; and (13) rights of minors. An organizing theme was to encourage the development of social policies which will protect and strengthen family life to counteract current social forces that tend to discourage family formation. The symposium schedule is included. (VM)

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SYMPOSIUM ON "SHUT OUT YOUTH"

25-30 October 1987

EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE

WORKING GROUP I

SOCIAL POLICY AND SHUT OUT YOUTH

OUTLINE OF THEME AND WORKSHOPS

Outline

The purpose of adopting this theme is to demonstrate how many different aspects of social policies affect the lives of shut out youth. Through small groups, workshops and plenaries we aim to produce recommendations on how co-ordinated social policies, which take full account of the needs of shut out youth, can be developped at local, national and international levels. In particular we aim to assess the relevance of the current emphasis on the centrality of 'the family' in the social policies of European states and international bodies in relation to the phenomenon of 'Shut Out Youth'.

SOCIAL POLICY AND SHUT OUT YOUTH

The starting poing is the concerns expressed by the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs as following :
- "the need for a re-evaluation of approaches, concepts and priorities in social policy .... (as a result of) the dramatic rise in social expenditure caused by economic difficulties and the increasing number of people needing assistance".
- "the danger that the required changes will stress intergenerational solidarity within the family, the community and in society !"
- "Some welfare policies have contributedto family dissolution or discouraged family formation. Social policies should have as one objective the protection and strenghtening of family life".

These starting points are to be addressed in terms of participants' experience of shut out youth.

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Plenary

The theme of the working group will be introduced at an early plenary of the symposium. Participants selecting this theme will be requested to attend all four workshops.

Workshops - Methodology

The emphasis in workshops will be on mutual sharing of experience and on the critical analysis of existing and projected social policy structures. Each workshops will be introduced and facilitated by Melle Elisabeth Callu and Mr. Paul Burton. Visiting experts and expert participants will be invited to respond to the work of the group.

Workshop 1

Small group work and group discussion. Experience and Policy. How does the phenomenon of youth homelessness relate to existing social policies.

Workshop 2

Discussion on Family Policy. How does the emphasis on the 'family unit' in social policy planning relate to the needs of 'shut out youth'. It is intended that a representative of the secretariat of Social Affairs Ministers will be present to respond to this debate.

Workshop 3

Simulation and discussion. Are there existing models of social policy development (local/national/international) which can be applied to the issue of shut out youth.

Workshop 4

Small groups and full group. We formulate a social policy statement on shut out youth.

WORKING GROUP II

METHODS AND MODELS OF WORKING PRACTICE

Workshops

It is intended to run four workshop sessions which will deal with the following areas/subjects :

1. Health
2. Housing
3. Social welfare
4. Criminality

The workshops will be introduced by a short paper on the response by an individual project or country to the above topic with the aim of stimulating discussion on the subject, rather than a descriptive analysis of a specific project or country's response to the problem.

With material being exhibited in the "market place" from the beginning of the symposium, participants will have an opportunity to get a basic idea of what projects are in existence and what projects are being run in each country.

1. Short stand on theme : what do we hope to achieve ?

2. Methodology : a. Market Place

b. Workshop groups led by care workers/practitioners with an emphasis on the sharing of experience and views.

1st session : Health :

Subject : How does your project respond to the medical needs of "shut of youth" ?

How does being homeless affect your health and how does it affect your entitlement to medical care ?

The aim of this workshop is to share the experience of medical care in each country with people in other countries where medical care may be much less developed or much more developed. With the Northern European trend towards privatised medical care, the most vulnerable members of society suffer. This workshop will allow participants to discuss the nature of the medical response to "shut out youth".

2nd session : Housing

Subject : How are the accommodation needs of "shut out youth" met by your project ?

This workshop is intended to encourage participants to think about who has responsibility for providing accommodation for "shut out youth" and the role of their projects. Yves Bayze will introduce the theme with a short discussion on how the "Group for Research, Access and Aid for Housing : G.R.A.A.L." in Lille, is encouraging the local authority to take responsibility for housing in Lille.

3rd session : Social welfare

Subject : Do "shut out youth" whom you work with have a right and access to a statutory financial safety net - social security ?

The aim of this workshop is to explore the variety of entitlements which "shut out youth" have to social security. Are there requirements for entitlement to social security such as an address which automatically excludes "shut out youth" and does this force them to be homeless ?

4th session : Criminality

Subject : What is the response to "shut out youth" who break the law in your country ?

The aim of this workshop is to explore how "shut out youth" are affected by the criminal system. A criminal career often begins at an early age - does being homeless increase the chances of a person becoming a criminal ? If so, is there a way in which this form of discrimination can be prevented ?

WORKING GROUP III

SHUT OUT YOUTH AND THE CYCLE OF VULNERABILITY

Outline

With this theme, we will consider the life patterns of "shut out youth". Can their vulnerability be predicted at an early stage ? Does this have implications for prevention and for the development of services ?

Methodology

The theme will be introduced by the Duch exhibition "A roof is not a home" which will be displayed at the EYC during the Symposium. The theme will also be introduced at a full plenary of the Symposium with contributions from homeless young people. Workshop sessions will explore the lessons to be learnt from the experiences of services which respond to them. We will produce models and recommendations for practical ways in which "shut out youth" can be aided to break out of the vicious cycle of homelessness.

Plenary

Homeless young people will describe their experiences and the ways in which existing services have responded to them.
Professor van der Ploeg, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Leiden, will outline the demographic changes and changes in family structures underlying the phenomenon of "shut out youth". Professor van der Ploeg will describe, from his research, the "careers" of homeless young people and the psychological effects on young people of a life pattern of exclusion.

Working groups

Participants interested in following this theme will be invited to form working groups on topics of special interest to them. A number of experts in various aspects of this field will be available to discuss topics in detail. A final workshop session will coordinate a statement from the group on a programme of services for the prevention of youth homeless in Europe.

WORKING GROUP IV

RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

When we consider young people running away from home, those without shelter, the following question comes to mind : what rights do minors and young adults have throughout the countries of Europe?

- to reach their goal of autonomy and a self-determined life
- to claim social and socio-pedagogical help if they live in unfavourable circumstances, are deprived of an equal chance, or are disadvantaged.

Within these 2 themes - the right to freedom and autonomy on the one hand and the right to social support on the other - the legal systems of the different European countries can be analysed and compared.

Six different themes or approaches to these problems are suggested here, which could be included in the general theme "rights of young people".

1. Majority

This aspect is easy to perceive on a formal level and marks an important change from the dependent status of a minor to that of an adult equipped with full civil rights and liberty of action.

2. Law of parental custody

The relation between parents and their children figures under this aspect, ie scope and content of parental custody.

3. As regards the phenomenon of young people running away from home, the aspect of particular importance is that of the right to determine residence.

4. Well-being of the child

The well-being of the child, understood here as the limit of parental custody, and as the yardstick for public action, is a relatively young category. The question is, to what extent is this now accepted as a general guideline and category.

5. Interventions

It would be important to discuss under this topic which forms of action are foreseen by the authorities or courts in cases where the well-being of the child is in danger and which are the competent institutions, ie the ones obliged to intervene.

6. Public assistance to young people

At this point it should be elaborated which are the public authorities, institutions, etc, legitimated or obliged to act if young people have pedagogical and social problems.

7. Rights of minors

Under this aspect, it should be sketched out which rights and possibilities minors have in the different European countries. This includes especially the right to a hearing and to file applications in court procedures concerning them directly.

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SYMPOSIUM ON "SHUT OUT YOUTH"

25-30 OCTOBER 1987

EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE

Sunday 25 October

Arrival of participants
Registration at the European Youth Centre (EYC)

19h00 Dinner

20h30 Keynote address to the Symposium
Mr. A.A. LACERDA DE QUEIROZ, Member of European Parliament, Committee on Social Affairs and Employment (invited)

21h00 Reception by the Director of the European Youth Centre

Monday 26 October

9h30 Opening of the Symposium
Introduction to the European Youth Centre by Peter Lauritzen, EYC

Statement on
"Young people's needs and the response of social policy" by Franco Marziale, Director of the EYC

Statement on
"The European Young Homelessness Group - a network for the work with the homeless in Europe" by Nic Fenton, London

Introduction to the programme of the Symposium, its working methods and the working documents

14h30 Presentation of exhibition materials (Market place)

16h00 Presentation of Working group II
"Methods and Models of Working Practice"

17h00 Presentation of Working group IV
"Legal Rights of Shut out Youth"

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Tuesday 27 October

9h30 Presentation of working group III
"The Cycle of Vulnerability"

11h00 Working groups

14h30 Working groups continued

Wednesday 28 October

9h30 Working groups

14h30 Plenary session
"The future of liaison and co-operation between services working for young homeless people in Europe"

16h00 Occasion for visits :
European Parliament, Council of Europe, City of Strasbourg, etc.

20h00 Round-table discussion with parliamentarians

Thursday 29 October

9h30 Working groups

11h30 Meeting with a group of young homeless and youth workers, holding a simultaneous session in Strasbourg

14h30 Plenary session :
Presentation of the report of the Symposium by the Rapporteur General
Exchange of views on the report

17h00 Closing session and evaluation of the Symposium

21h00 Farewell Party

Friday 30 October

Departure of participants

PROGRAMME-NOTES

1. There is no separate plenary for Theme I as this is dealt within the opening plenary.

2. Additional workshops, discussion groups, committees, etc. can be created by participants.

3. Theme reports will be drafted on Wednesday for translation and duplication. They will be conformed or amended by theme groups on Thursday. This allows the rapporteur to begin to drafting the Final Report on Wednesday.

4. This programme omits the details of working lunches, video showings and other events. These will be posted daily for the attention of participants.

5. The introductory paper to working groups IV "Legal Rights of Shut out Youth" is still under preparation and will be sent to you in good time before the Symposium.

6. Please find attached introductory papers for working groups I-IV.